



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2015

Location: Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Hartford, CT

In attendance: Laurie Cantwell, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Allison Quirion, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Lisa Sheppard, Marcus Rivera, Mona Tremblay

On Phone: Ann Gionet

Absent: April Dipollina, Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez, Karen Hlavac, Jody Santoro, Robin Wood, Renee Toper

Guests: Annika Burney, Office of the Healthcare Advocate

Call to Order: 10:21 am

Public Comment: None

Approval of September Minutes – Mona Tremblay made a motion to accept the minutes as written; this was seconded by Marcus Rivera and approved by the Council membership with abstention from Laurie Cantwell.

Old Business

Membership/Nominations Committee

Brochure – Linda Mizzi brought the final printed brochures to the meeting and reported that they have already been disseminated at the “Building a Better Life” conference. Council members were encouraged to take brochures if they had places at which to disseminate.

New Member Recruitment – Linda Mizzi has identified a family member who may be interested in joining the Council and who will most likely attend the next meeting as a guest. Current vacancies in appointments are as follows:

Governor - 3
Senate Pro Tempore - 1
Speaker of the House - 1
House Majority Leader - 2

Senate Majority Leader - 1

Mona Tremblay reported that she is having difficulty getting her reappointment letter. There was some discussion about difficulties some members are having in accessing legislators. Allison Quirion suggested contact through legislative aides and she may be able to provide an updated contact list which she will share with the Council. Some members expressed concern of not been getting responses even from legislative aides.

Officers Needed – The Council was reminded that a Co-Chair and Secretary are still needed.

Family Networking Committee

Mona Tremblay drafted a letter with the purpose of inviting family groups to participate in future Council meetings to increase family voice and collaboration and gain input around issues and areas of need as well as hear about family support across the state. This may have the added impact of increasing membership over time.

The letter will be sent to the full Council via email for any additional comments and feedback so this can be finalized.

The Family Networking Committee is also planning in the future to develop and disseminate a family survey as a way of collecting current data on family issues and concerns.

New Business

Discussion with Legislators – this is still in process and Lisa Sheppard is coordinating.

Feedback from “Building a Better Life” Conference – April Dipollina, Laurie Cantwell and Renee Tooper were all in attendance. Brochures were made available.

Focus for the Coming Year – this was added to the agenda to continue the discussion from the Retreat. There is interest in bringing some specific topic areas to meetings in addition to the family groups who will be invited. Allison Quirion reminded the Council of discussions that occurred during the preparation of the Annual Report and the decision that the Council needed to explore concerns in the education arena. Some of the issues identified for more discussion include:

- Reading issues for children with disabilities;
- Review and discuss data from the SDE State systemic improvement plan for students with disabilities;
- Review data on IDEA Part B Compliance for students with disabilities;
- Review of OSEP report on testing scores; and
- Discuss concern about higher education teacher preparation for students with disabilities (e.g. no higher education program or certification for students with Dyslexia).

Given the large number of educational issues, Marcus Rivera will discuss with the Bureau Chief of Special Education to determine how best to address these issues at future meetings.

The Council is also interested in having the speaker from DCF return to continue the discussion around initiatives to support families involved with DCF.

Another concern, which has been raised at other meetings, is the extent to which issues related to children with disabilities are “at the table” in various forums. One hope is to have someone from the Commission on Children to discuss this with the Council at a future meeting.

Council members also want to assure there is time for sharing family concerns and get consumer input; one way to handle this is to set aside time for this when invited family groups join the meetings.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary